

CRT'S QUALITY

MAKING AN IMPACT

by Kasey Talbott

*CRT Program and
Communications Director*

Greenprinting helps communities make informed quality growth and conservation decisions, providing planning decision makers with consolidated GIS data that can be analyzed to develop the best possible development scenario.

Cumberland Region Tomorrow (CRT), a regional quality growth collaborative partnership in the 10-county middle Tennessee region, has gained a reputation for providing tools and resources that help communities implement quality growth planning and development that makes wise use of fiscal resources, enhances economic competitiveness, and provides more choices and a higher quality of life for citizens. One of CRT's most well known tools is the award-winning Quality Growth Toolbox, which has assisted numerous communities in pursuing quality growth strategies and policy implementation. However, CRT offers other tools that communities can use to achieve more specific outcomes as well.

Greenprinting

One such tool is the GIS GreenPrint Tools for Quality Growth. Four years ago the term "greenprinting" was mostly a foreign concept in middle Tennessee. Greenprinting has gained prominence as an additional tool in helping the planning sector to make decisions that ensure access to and knowledge of critical lands for conservation. Greenprinting is the creation of scenarios that help communities make informed quality growth

and conservation decisions. It provides planning decision makers with consolidated GIS data, which can then be analyzed to develop the best possible scenario for development.

In 2006, CRT introduced the concept of GIS greenprinting to the 10-county middle Tennessee region in the Quality Growth Toolbox chapter "Conserving Our Region's Land, Water, Natural, and Cultural Resources." This new tool was the first of its kind in Tennessee and is the most comprehensive set of consolidated GIS planning information now available in Tennessee. This web-based tool allows for free access to both laypersons and planning experts to navigate, analyze, and compare large sets of data layers from the parcel to regional scale.

To date, the GIS GreenPrint has been used as a comprehensive planning tool by several communities in the 10-county region leading to comprehensive plans and policies that support local open-space conservation priorities. One such plan is the current Robertson County Comprehensive Growth and Development Plan.

Robertson County

The Robertson County Comprehen-

GROWTH TOOLS

IN MIDDLE TENNESSEE

sive Growth and Development Plan is an intergovernmental initiative of the county and the cities of Adams, Cross Plains, and Coopertown to create a long-term vision and strategic plan for the county's residents. The 2040 Vision Plan is designed to build off the desire of citizens to retain the rural, agricultural economy that is unique to Robertson County while managing encroaching growth from the Nashville metropolitan area and capitalizing on opportunities for economic development as outlined in the Realizing Robertson's Future Economic Development Plan.

CRT first began working with Robertson County with the 2006 release of the CRT Quality Growth Toolbox and partnered with American Institute of Architects (AIA) of Middle Tennessee to fund and implement the region's first quality growth pilot project in the county. This collaborative partnership led to the AIA 150 Blueprint for America Visioning Workshop for Robertson County and produced a 2007 summary report titled "On Preserving Open Space and Revitalizing Historic Town Centers," which led to broad consensus among Robertson County citizens "to maintain the agriculture landscape and encourage future growth

around existing town centers and infrastructure" and recommended that the county create a Comprehensive Growth and Development Plan.

In 2012, completion, adoption, and implementation of a comprehensive growth and development plan was formally called for by the Robertson County, Adams, Coopertown, and Cross Plains commissions and city councils. Consultants for the Robertson County Comprehensive Growth and Development Plan are currently using CRT's GIS GreenPrint data to compile and analyze the county's key natural, cultural, agricultural, and historical assets. This information will be used to create a plan that guides growth and development while protecting these assets. "To have all of this data in one place and to be able to show it so clearly is an amazing asset for us as we work with Robertson County leaders in achieving their growth and development goals," said Carey Hayo of Littlejohn Engineering.

Statewide Implementation of GIS GreenPrint Data

Using the GIS GreenPrint Tools for Quality Growth as a basis, the

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The CRT Quality Growth Planning Audit, to be released in 2013, seeks to identify planning policies and tools being implemented in all 56 local government municipalities and counties within the 10-county middle Tennessee region.

Knoxville and Jackson regions are discussing creation of a similar GIS GreenPrint tool to aid in their regional planning and implementation efforts. CRT is working closely with these organizations through the Tennessee Regions' Roundtable to aid in the development, funding, and implementation of a GIS GreenPrint tool for each region.

CRT Quality Growth Planning Audit

CRT's latest tool is being developed for release in 2013. The purpose of the CRT Quality Growth Planning Audit is to provide an updated inventory list of quality growth planning implementation based on CRT's Quality Growth Toolbox tools and strategies within the 10-county middle Tennessee region. Specifically the report seeks to identify planning policies and tools being implemented in all 56 local government municipalities and counties.

The audit will help local and regional elected officials and decision makers to monitor the progress of local planning in the middle Tennessee region and identify "quality growth gaps" that can help local, regional, and state policymakers create incentives for more quality growth planning and implementation.

The Greater Nashville Regional Council (GNRC) has partnered with CRT to help implement and validate the report. "This audit will be an asset for middle Tennessee. CRT has provided a great service for the planning community to measure our progress as a region," said GNRC

Deputy Executive Director of Research and Planning Tim Roach.

Quality Growth Principles

The CRT Quality Growth Toolbox is based on the CRT Quality Growth Principles.

- Guide region's growth with comprehensive community plans
- Update zoning, subdivision, and building codes to implement community plans
- Use design to protect and enhance our region's diversity of community character
- Redevelop and strengthen our region's cities, towns, and rural communities to ensure a range of unique lifestyle choices
- Create a variety of housing choices for our region's diverse workforce
- Conserve our region's land, water, natural, and cultural resources for our future economic, health, and social well being
- Link land use and transportation planning to promote an integrated framework to guide growth and development
- Guide public and private investment to efficiently use pre-existing infrastructure and developed land
- Think and act regionally to ensure our future livability and economic vitality

Using these principles a set of 52 quality growth tools and strategies was developed. The Quality Growth Planning Audit evaluates each community by its current policies, ordinances, and zoning addressing this set of criteria. CRT also looked at

phases of implementation and when it occurred. The final document will provide a snapshot report for each community to review and compare its progress with others in the region and analysis on overall progress in the region.

Nashville General Plan

In 2012, the Metropolitan Nashville Planning Department requested the Quality Growth Planning Audit data for the research phase of the Nashville General Plan, a three-year process to update the vision and policies for growth and development for Davidson County into 2040. CRT provided data collected on the six counties surrounding Davidson as part of the plan's regional focus. This information will help the Nashville 2040 General Plan develop growth and policies that complement bordering local community policies.

"Davidson County is not an island. We have to be aware of how our neighbors are planning to grow and develop. This helps us as a region better coordinate land-use decisions and policies, which ultimately leads to a more effective and efficient government for everyone," said Metropolitan Nashville Planning Department Executive Director Rick Bernhardt.

By providing each community with up-to-date progress reports on planning and development in the region, CRT helps communities share resources and learn from each other, fostering a greater sense of regionalism and leading to more quality communities, wiser use of fiscal resources, and more economically vibrant communities. ■